Let’s Talk Advising First-Year Students

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Session Goals

Supporting first-year students

Share ideas

Build community
My Interactions with First-Year Students

- Student Success Centre
  - Academic Support
  - Writing Support
  - Exploratory Advising

- Thrive

- Workshops for Orientation
  - First Year Scholars Program
First Year Scholars (FYS)

An interdisciplinary community that provides high-achieving, incoming students with an opportunity to engage in advising appointments, workshops, and events focused on learning and leadership. In this program, students receive tailored support from the Student Success Centre to help them reach their goals at UCalgary and beyond.
When I look back over my first year at university, I will know I was successful if I...

- Received **good grades**
- Achieved **balance**
- Met my **goals**
- Found **enjoyment** in my program
- Have a **plan** for future years
- **Connected** with others; made friends
- Got **involved**
Trends in First-Year Advising Challenges

- Managing time effectively
- Finding ways to get involved
- Applying effective study strategies
- Adapting to different class/test modalities
- Building capacity for wellness
- Understanding program requirements

What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?
During this academic year (21/22), which of these challenges have you most commonly advised first-years on? Rank from most (1) to least (6).

1st: Understanding program requirements
2nd: Managing time effectively
3rd: Adapting to different class/test modalities
4th: Applying effective study strategies
5th: Building capacity for wellness
6th: Finding ways to get involved
What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

- Understanding Canadian education expectations
- Not liking online studying
- Online, hybrid, in-person learning differences
- Not as academically prepared.
- Understanding budget and what it means to be school ready
- Students are overwhelmed
- Homesickness
- Lack of engagement
- Need more resources for support (mental health, more substantive study solutions, etc.)
What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When/how to register.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balancing work life and school</td>
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<tr>
<td>mental health - dealing with information overload with lower capacity to</td>
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<tr>
<td>cope</td>
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<td></td>
<td>they find the course loads very high</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lack of interest in engaging because classes are online</td>
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<td>knowing how to communicate in a professional/education setting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Struggling with classes, more withdrawals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lack study skills</td>
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<td>Actually getting meetings booked and building relationships with students</td>
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<td>while online instead of on campus</td>
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What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

- Finances
- Connecting with other students in meaningful ways, specially for online courses.
- Students in 3rd year who have never been to campus.
- Giving up on taking classes “because they are too hard” without using any resources or contacting instructors etc.
- Whether a student could continue online classes (not distance education)
- Knowing how to find the resources that the university offers
- Not knowing the institution’s academic policies
- Not feeling like they have a community
- Struggling which course to take
What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress, too much course load</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing student expectations. COVID required lots of flexibility, now we are returning to more structure</td>
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<td>Knowledge gaps from disrupted HS courses (due to COVID)</td>
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<td>not liking their instructors/professors</td>
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<td>They are very unsure of themselves and feel that they are “behind” (compare selves to others or have a perfectionist mindset).</td>
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<td>Shock, given their new environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not understanding in-campus education expectations because of their experience in the last year</td>
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<td>Financial issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>anxiety about covid and in-person learning</td>
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What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

- Finding a balance of work, school, life
- Don’t know what questions to ask
- Unfamiliar with resources available

- Becoming isolated in not wanting to come to campus anymore

- Concerns over their family members’ (covid-related) sickness

- Finances: not checking or confirming some essential things, which in-turn has an affect on concentration and mental wellness.

- Not having enough volunteering opportunities available

- Asking for help late in the term, understanding grading system (international students), what being on probation means.

- First-year international students tend to think education system in Canada are the same with their home countries. For example, registration, declaration (some countries don’t have such system).

- Understanding Post Sec systems Finding out they are in a program that doesn’t suit them and how to make a change

- “Why am I paying for this”...online, lack of help
What other challenges have you noticed recently while supporting first-year students?

- Online learning under the roof of their parents = more helicopter influence
- Managing hybrid schedules, testing + for covid when expected to be in-person
- Overwhelmed by info, and missing important deadlines. International with other first-languages = more challenges. More peer mentors could help?
In breakout groups, **choose a challenge** from our menti exercise to discuss in more detail. As a group:

1. **Introduce yourselves**

2. **Discuss the challenge:**
   - What specific things are you noticing related to this challenge?
   - E.g. Managing time effectively: many students aren’t engaging in big-picture planning and reverse engineering.

3. **Share best practices** or brainstorm solutions for addressing this challenge.
   - E.g. Offering workshops on big-picture planning in the summer; having templates and examples available for students.

Pick one person to record your main ideas and be ready to share.
Thank you!

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